



Office of the Mayor

NEWS RELEASE

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Mayor Luecke to veto Marquette landmark designation

***SOUTH BEND, IND.** -- Mayor Stephen J. Luecke announced today that he has written a letter to the South Bend Common Council outlining his decision to veto a bill that would have designated Marquette Primary Center as a local historic landmark.*

Here are the priorities and reasons the Mayor outlined in his letter explaining his decision today to Council President Timothy Rouse as well as a request to the South Bend Community School Corp.:

PRIORITIES: My first priority is that an elementary school remain at this location. Though I personally would favor renovation of the existing building, I am keenly aware that historic designation status does not guarantee that a school will remain in the building. SBCSC can still move forward with new construction either on this lot, or at another location. Because the entire parcel is designated, it may be more difficult for the School Corp. to build on this lot.

In addition, past practice of the Common Council has been to seek the consent of the owner when designating a building as historic. ... An exception can be made for publicly owned buildings, but the owner's acceptance is important to the success of landmarking.

REASONS: I veto Bill 61-07 for the following reasons:

- It designates the entire parcel as historic rather than the building and a portion of land around it.
- It does not have the support of the owner.
- The public remonstrance should cast the final vote in whether or not the School Corp. can build a new school at this site.

REQUESTS: As I veto this bill, I also have several requests concerning this site of the South Bend Community School Corporation.

First, please maintain and operate a quality school at this location.

Second, though I respect the process and due diligence used in choosing to build a new school rather than renovate the existing building, I do not believe that the general public is fully convinced that this is the best choice. Also, some believe that there is new information which should be evaluated. So, I respectfully request the School Corp. to revisit the analysis of costs to renovate Marquette and to also take advantage of Bill Latoza's offer to share his experience with the Chicago School system. There is time to do this "value engineering" of the decision before the bond is approved. It may lead to the same conclusion, but residents will be assured that you have fully investigated all possible options.

Third, if a new school is constructed at the site, please have the architecture complement the neighborhood and site the building in such a way that demolition of the existing school is not required.

Finally, if a new school is constructed, please be open to alternate uses for the existing building. If a viable use is found, with financing and a feasible business plan, please cooperate with a developer to help renovation of the building to succeed.